

National Teacher Workforce Action Plan

Response from the Australian Primary Teachers Association, National Advisory Council

The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) represents principals from all states and territories from government, catholic and independent schools (24 jurisdictions in all comprising some 7,600 principals and school leaders, 200,000 teachers and 2.2 million students across Australia).

The National Advisory Council (NAC) of the Australian Primary Principals Association met on March 7 and 8, 2023, to discuss the December 2022 version of the *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan*.

Summary

The NTWAP lists five priority areas for action:

1. **Improving teacher supply**
2. **Strengthening initial teacher education**
3. **Keeping the teachers we have**
4. **Elevating the profession**
5. **Better understanding future teacher workforce needs**

NAC members are strongly supportive of initiatives to **increase teacher supply** with the emphasis on incentives such as bursaries, scholarships, HECS forgiveness, advertising campaigns and the like.

When it comes to **strengthening initial teacher education (ITE)**, NAC members are sceptical about the proposed process. The review panel is heavily dominated by university members and despite review after review into ITE recommending greater integration of the practicum and university components of teaching courses¹, there has been no significant reform. There is a perceived reluctance from some universities to partner in teacher education and it is hoped this will be addressed as part of this priority.

In the view of NAC members, the responses to **retaining teachers in the profession** while somewhat helpful, are band aid responses which fail to address the broader issues of retaining teachers in the workforce. While a focus on teacher supply is welcome and understandable, much more needs to be done to address the reasons that teachers are leaving the profession. Acting to address supply impediments without focussing on broader, fundamental factors, will not be a long-term solution to the teacher shortage.

¹ "Every single person or group that came before TEMAG emphasised the centrality and criticality of the professional experience. Every single submission talked about its importance...every single person proposed the greater integration of practicum and professional experience with university, teaching and theory." - Professor Greg Craven. Chair of the 2014 Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group.

<https://www.educationmattersmag.com.au/temag-and-the-way-forward-perspectives-on-professional-experience-induction-and-professional-development-for-teachers/>



APPA contends that there are several factors contributing to the intensification of teachers' and principals' work and we have been consistently highlighting these in a number of submissions. APPA contends that this intensification of work demands is one of the key reasons we are attracting less teachers to the profession and why many are leaving the profession early. A recruitment and retention strategy which fails to recognise these fundamental issues is an insufficient strategy.

APPA contends that these overarching issues must be recognised in any design of a national teacher workforce action plan. This response from APPA firstly addresses these fundamental issues which can and should be addressed as part of a recruitment strategy (Section 1) and secondly responds to the specific proposals (actions) from the working party (Section 2).

Section 1: The overarching issues facing the profession which must be addressed as part of an action plan.

1. Finding the balance between local decision making and central determination

The current balance is tilted towards too much central determination. The bureaucratic mindset seems to be that:

- schools can be managed through policy settings and measurement
- Input relates to an output (cause and effect are tightly linked and can be summed up in the 'ten steps to change;' 'the 7 essential elements of...')
- Increasing accountability leads to better outcomes (*What gets measured gets managed; more data leads to better predictions...*)

While this mindset is applicable to many situations, it is not always applicable or helpful in school settings. Sometimes outcomes (outputs) are distant from inputs. Children learn at different rates and sometimes surprise us when things all come together. Many students tell stories of a teacher that made a difference, 'a teacher who believed in me and encouraged me to believe in myself.'

APPA is not arguing for a decrease in accountabilities. We want to be accountable. But we call for accountabilities that encourage responsiveness at the local school and system level. There is no 'one-size fits all' approach. In many cases, resourcing schools to enable local decision making is likely to be an effective approach. Principals need to be supported to make locally based decisions and provided with the resources to do so. Top-down models of command and control can be effective in procedural systems. In school systems where nearly every situation is contextual, decision making must be shifted to the school level (with support and guidance in some situations).

Take as an example, the proposed action 21 (*Identify the most effective use of initial teacher education (ITE) students, teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff*). If this is to be a national project, how will it be helpful to schools? Will we get yet another report which we need to digest, another action plan to implement, another set of guidelines which we barely have time to read?



How a school might use their TAs or ITE students will depend on context. Who is available to do what? What are the strengths of a person and how do we best utilise them? Where are the skill shortages and how do we fill them?

If there is only one person available to fill a TA role in a community, perhaps we adapt the TA role to suit the strengths of that person! These are all decisions that should be taken at a local level where the context is known. We need to take seriously, the ability of experienced educators to make good decisions to suit their context and to move away from the increasingly prevalent, management by clipboard and checklist approach which is sadly killing initiative and creativity.

In summary – give us some air! Devolve more resources to the school level and trust senior educators to make good decisions.

2. Involve schools in policy development

A key component of teacher retention is making the workload manageable. This means schools need input into policy decisions that impact them. While it is recognised that Governments set policy agendas, those policy agendas must be enriched by a school perspective. Working with schools to assess the practicality of policy propositions is more likely to lessen the intensification of work demands on principals and school staff and make schools happier workplaces.

Policy makers must consider any policy proposition from the perspective of schools – and that perspective is of the school as a whole, not the multiple competing demands of numerous silos. When the bureaucracy is organised in silos, each of which transmits their edicts to schools without the crucial test of practicality, this adds to intensification of work for school practitioners. And too many edicts, from too many silos results in an intensification of the work of principals and teachers to the point of ridiculousness. Sadly, this is the position we increasingly find ourselves in.

3. Resourcing

Primary schools are funded significantly less per student than their secondary equivalents. Yet primary outcomes substantially set the course of a student's life. Prior performance in primary school, predicts future outcomes more so than student background or parental education or occupation². APPA calls for funding to ensure an education of the highest quality for every student, in every locale and for funding to be targeted to those students who need it most.

The Productivity Commission noted, in their review of the next *National Schools Resource Agreement*, that student engagement has declined. We want to engage all children, whatever their passion. If we can increase participation, we feel we can better engage children in education and improve literacy and numeracy outcomes in the process. Having a curriculum which allows the space for literacy and numeracy together with

² Denny, L (2022). Primary school matters. Positioning paper: The case for change. www.primaryfocus.org.au



specialist areas such as art, drama, music, school productions, sport teams, those things which build a community and human relationships, are the heart of schooling.

To do this, we need appropriate specialist teachers and resourcing must also allow for the employment of appropriate specialist teachers to supplement the expertise of classroom teachers.

Too often universal solutions are proposed to what are often subtly different local problems. We want resource provision to allow for good decisions to be made locally where possible and appropriate.

4. Coordinated support for children (0 to 8 coordination)

Teachers become frustrated when children in need of help can't access help in a timely manner. A lack of access to appropriate services often expresses itself as severe and inappropriate behavioural enactments – which in turn sees a number of teachers leaving the workforce. It shouldn't be like this. There are many, many agencies and NGOs providing duplicate services, soaking up much needed resources which are not effectively used. There are too many uncoordinated service providers, none of which individually have the capacity to provide the level of service needed by some children and their families.

Insufficiently coordinated services to children and their families leads to rectifiable problems not being addressed and teacher burnout. We can do better. We must have coherent, joined up services that work with children and families in need. The many resources available across agencies and NGOs, must change from the current ethos of scarcity and 'passing the funding buck' to one of providing service. And in supporting children and families, we are supporting teachers stay connected with teaching.

Allied health care support in communities is in short supply and particularly hard to access in rural/remote areas of the country. Schools and families need ready access to psychologists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, paediatricians and like services.

This must be a whole of government agenda and we are encouraged by Minister Clare's interest in coordination of services for children from 0 to 8 years of age. It is difficult to coordinate across government departments but it is essential we try. APPA suggests working on a 'patch' service model; the patch is any appropriate community – sometimes a town, sometimes a suburb, sometimes a geographic region or local government area – whatever is appropriate. And in that patch people from different agencies and NGOs should coordinate and work together to support children and families. We suggest teams of two to three workers be assigned as primary contacts for families with high needs and these small teams form relationships with the families and broker appropriate services.

5. A content dominated curriculum

We must make teacher workload manageable and we can do this by developing a primary curriculum which reflects teaching realities. The current primary and early childhood curriculum is too crowded, impossible to teach if taken literally, and is based on outdated models of curriculum, steeped in coverage.



The curriculum documents should have begun with school and classroom practice realities, especially in primary school and particularly in the early years.³

APPA advocates for a primary curriculum which allows the space for literacy and numeracy together with activities which connect kids and make them a part of the community and the community part of schools.

6. NAPLAN

In its current form, NAPLAN may well be the architect of its own decline. APPA contends all-in national testing, creates a cycle of competition for better NAPLAN results and in the process, redirects teaching towards a greater focus on test outcomes. APPA contends this is well intentioned but wrong - with the unintended consequence of redirecting teaching to a narrower focus on the 'basics' with conversely, **less engagement of children with schooling**. *This leads to less job satisfaction and more frustrated teachers.*

APPA advocates shifting national testing to measures of the performance of educational jurisdictions, not the performance of every child. This can be achieved by comprehensive sample testing, not national testing of all children. Feedback on the progress of individual children is much more effectively addressed through regular in-school testing. NAPLAN only provides belated feedback for a particular student, once every two years and is best used to gather system information and feedback - through sample testing.

When student, teacher, principal and school performance is (wrongly) assessed through NAPLAN results, NAPLAN gets a primacy it doesn't deserve. And don't be misled by the weight that is put on NAPLAN – walk into any bookstore in the months leading up to NAPLAN and see the wall of NAPLAN testing resources directed to parents. It is no wonder that we are in the midst of an epidemic of childhood anxiety - please let children be children and make testing a process that assists with learning, not some national circus. NAPLAN can be helpful – let us make it so.

7. Remuneration, conditions and incentives to stay teaching

The status of the teaching profession needs to be elevated and pay scales need to be reviewed and increased. In jurisdictions where teachers are well paid, the workforce is more stable, has more capacity and the outcomes are higher.⁴

In the coming years, education is competing with numerous other areas of the workforce in attracting personnel. We must have competitive salaries and this needs to be part of the discussion. There needs to be a significant increase in teacher salary – especially for experienced career teachers. While early career teachers are relatively well placed in financial terms, more experienced teachers reach a level at which their classification and remuneration remains fixed and doesn't match other professions of similar qualification and expertise. Older scheme superannuation incentives proved remarkably effective in encouraging teachers to stick with teaching as a profession – perhaps this could also be considered by the working party.

³ Donnelly, K. & Wiltshire, K. 2014. Review of the Australian Curriculum. Australian Government Department of Education

⁴ Dr. Cherie Taylor-Patel, President New Zealand Principals' Federation.



Remuneration is not the whole story. If we want to connect teachers to their work-place and for them to stay connected with the profession, we also need to substantially improve their conditions. Teachers must have time for planning, assessment, and reporting, and these need to become scheduled as part of the working week. But more than this, teachers need to feel valued, to feel they are contributing to something bigger than them, to have the flexibility to respond to their particular group of students. And teachers feel they can do this when children with obvious needs, are able to access assistance and appropriate allied professionals; when the curriculum is sensibly structured; when good curriculum support materials are produced; when national testing focuses on the performance of the jurisdiction and not the child; when specialist teachers are readily available to supplement the teacher's own strengths, thereby enriching student programs.

8. Support for early career teachers

The development of quality teachers cannot be constructed as a simple set of processes. While graduate teachers are ready to start their teaching careers, they must be supported in their early years and expected to be continuing learners throughout the entirety of their careers. Quality teaching must be understood as a continuous process.

Beginning teachers often cite a lack of adequate support in their early years as a key reason for leaving the profession. They report inadequate mentoring and supervision, lack of support in behaviour management, excessive responsibilities, and failure to recognise and reward professional growth. By the second year out of university, as many as 29 per cent of new teachers may already be considering leaving the profession.⁵ This data is concerning and better support in the early years of a teacher's career might address some of this.

NAC members stress the importance of long-term support for early career teachers. Retaining high quality candidates in teaching is a high priority. Early career support is crucial to overall workforce retention.

Section 2: Comments on the priority areas and actions

This section summarises NAC member specific questions and comments on the specific actions listed in the report.

Priority area 1 – Improving teacher supply

Many of the actions in this priority area should be underpinned by a recognition of the support new teachers, and particularly new graduate teachers, need. Strong mentoring and support are essential if new teachers are to have an experience which strengthens their connection to the profession. How to engage with parents, establish themselves in their community, manage challenging conversations, learn appropriate written communication skills and setting boundaries when including parents in the classroom and on excursions, are all important skills learned on the job.

⁵ Action Now – Classroom Ready Teachers p. 41. <http://www.studentsfirst.gov.au/teacher-education-ministerial-advisory-group>



There are many successful internship models which we should revisit. Tasmania's Partnerships in Teaching Excellence was a very successful program.

Scholarship, bursaries and HECS debt forgiveness are all positive incentives.

Putting an emphasis on experienced teachers 'giving back to the profession' is critical. We need to deepen the beginning teacher professional culture.

Making the final year of a teaching course a paid internship year (with a reduced workload to allow study time, and structured in-school mentoring) will assist with supply and make teaching a more attractive option if students can begin to access salary earlier.

1. **More teaching places at universities in the right subjects and specialisations.**
 - a. How do we attract a diversity of applicants?
 - b. HECS free places would be attractive to many.
 - c. How will additional TAFE places support teacher numbers?

2. **5,000 bursaries worth up to \$40,000 each to help attract high quality candidates to the teaching profession.**
 - a. Strongly support targeted bursaries.
 - b. Providing permanency for bursary holders (after a probation year) would be very attractive to many.
 - c. In addition to bursaries and studentships, a reduction in HECS fees should be considered.

3. **1,500 more places in the High Achieving Teachers (HAT) program to encourage more professionals to switch careers to teaching and trial new ways of attracting and keeping teachers in the schools that need them most.**
 - a. Worthy of a trial.
 - b. Some NAC members stated the view that the HAT process has failed. Instead of a HAT process, what would a career path look like if it was conceived as graduate through to retirement? How might we plan for ongoing credentialling, remuneration advances, opportunities for higher duties and responsibilities? What might this look like?

4. **Prioritise visa processing for qualified teachers and prioritise teachers from state and territory nominated visa allocations.**
 - a. Some NAC members expressed concern that this strategy will help to solve our teacher shortage at the expense of other countries.
 - b. Other members expressed the view that our priority focus should be on people already living in Australia.
 - i. Relying on people coming in sufficient numbers to make a difference is a question mark.
 - ii. How will teachers from overseas be trained in the specialisations needed?
 - iii. Some members stated there are cultural and social differences that are marked and these can't be ignored.



5. **Prioritise conditional or provisional registration to increase the supply of teachers.**

- a. National registration allowing teachers to move easily between states and jurisdictions is important.
- b. The focus on supply is understandable but initial teacher education students MUST be supported by experienced mentors. We want them to stay in the profession.
- c. This could be a useful strategy if used carefully and with discernment!

6. **Teacher employers will look for opportunities to boost the number of permanent teachers, recognising the importance of permanency to secure jobs in creating a stable workforce.**

Strongly supported. Many people need permanency to move on with their lives.

7. **States and territories to investigate the potential to promote teaching, mentoring and other opportunities to people who are registered but not currently working as teachers.**

NAC members suggest a strong focus on flexible employment options – bringing back teachers who only wish to do occasional work will be very helpful in addressing supply issues.

Priority area 2 – Strengthening initial teacher education

We want to see a change of direction in school university partnerships in teacher training. This should be part of Professor Scott's brief in leading the *Teacher Education Expert Panel*. There is a perceived reluctance from some universities to partner in teacher education. NAC members are concerned with:

- the shortage of practicum placements;
- *the weak link between practicum and the theoretical components of courses;*
- the variable quality of supervision;
- the inadequacy of funding for practicum;
- the difficulty of ensuring that students have an opportunity to undertake practicum in rural and remote areas.

And believe that as students near the end of their teaching degree, more and more time should be spent in a school setting.

ITE must be a strong partnership with schools – and making the final year of an teaching course a paid internship year (with a reduced workload to allow study time, and structured in-school mentoring) would assist with supply and make teaching a more attractive option if students can begin to access salary earlier.

Partnerships between higher education providers and schools need to be recognised and funded according to the contribution of each partner. If models such as teaching schools and mentor teachers are being considered, these need to be appropriately funded. Commonwealth allocations and redirection of funding from other programs are all viable funding sources which should be considered as part of the review.



8. The Teacher Education Expert Panel, led by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Professor Mark Scott AO, is reviewing initial teacher education (ITE) and will recommend ways to boost graduation rates, and broadly ensure graduating teachers are better prepared for the classroom.

How do schools have more input into this review? The *Report of the Quality Initial Teacher Education Review (2022)*⁶ devotes a chapter (5) to examples of partnerships between Higher Education Providers and schools in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) but there is no recommendation to extend and systematise such partnerships. On page 58 of the report, it was noted that supervising teachers need more time and professional leaning to be effective supervisors and mentors but this is not picked up in the recommendations. Indeed, the report notes (p. 65) that schools and teachers report they have minimal or no contact with higher education providers while students are taking placements in schools. Again, this is not addressed in the recommendations.

- a. The key area identified for attention by NAC members, centred on strengthening the role of schools as **partners** in teacher education. This includes schools playing an increased role in supporting ITE students in their practical placements, and more time being made available for practical placements in schools.
- b. Schools want a stronger school/university partnership in training new teachers.

9. Recognise previous study, work experience and skills that may be transferable to teaching.

We support the intent of this action.

10. Co-design actions to attract and retain more First Nations teachers.

We strongly support the intent of this action. We must recognise the imperative of attracting and retaining first nations teachers, including removal of barriers such as HECS and the encouragement of students in regional areas to be as close as possible to home. We also need to ensure cultural sensitivity is incorporated in ITE programs and promoted within school staff cultures.

11. In recognition that the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE) should not be a barrier, all teaching students will undergo initial assessment of their personal literacy and numeracy skills in their first year to ensure they can receive targeted support if they need it.

- a. NAC members continue to question the necessity for this test. We see this as an unnecessary hurdle - surely literacy and numeracy competency should be assessed as part of a degree? In the LANTITE test, there is a strong emphasis on comprehension – again shouldn't this be inherent within study for a degree? There is also an emphasis on spelling some difficult words; checking your spelling and modelling this in front of children is not something to be ashamed of – it models effective literacy practice.
- b. If LANTITE must be retained, we support:

⁶ <https://www.education.gov.au/quality-initial-teacher-education-review/announcements/final-report-quality-initial-teacher-education-review>



- i. it being done at the start of a student's degree
- ii. more feedback on areas the student needs to improve in
- iii. increasing the number of permitted attempts at LANTITE
- iv. removal of the LANTITE testing fee.

Priority area 3 – Keeping the teachers we have

We don't want a myriad of responses to unnecessary initiatives. We don't need more national studies, we don't want more national guidelines, we don't want more reductionist teacher standards, we don't want national curriculum implementation guides or workload impact assessments. We don't want to be told how to most effectively use TAs and ITE students. We don't want all children being put through national testing regimes which warp the way teaching is undertaken.

We do want resourcing made available so that people closest to the situation can make appropriate decisions. We do want a new primary curriculum which reflects the realities of primary schools. We do want a partnership approach to policy development and we do want accountabilities that encourage responsiveness at the local school and system level.

12. Pilot new approaches to reduce teacher workload through a Workload Reduction Fund to maximise the value of a teacher's time.

NAC members strongly agree with the premise of this priority but:

- a. The suggested action is appreciated but misses the point. Teacher workload is reaching unsustainable levels because of misguided policy expectations. Our suggested response to addressing these broader issues is outlined in section one of this paper. We want to put the fun and joy put back into teaching. To do this we need space in the curriculum, we need input into policy development so that workable solutions are developed, we need coordinated service provision for children and families in need so that they are helped as a whole family, not picked at by multiple providers. We need better resourcing to make a difference in the life of children. We feel we don't need more pilot studies. We need things like a new primary curriculum, a curriculum which is based in the realities of primary education.
- b. A problem with this type of proposal is that some people suggest things like lesson planning can be 'outsourced.' Such a suggestion misunderstands how teaching works. A lot of thought goes in to lesson planning which is contextualised for the students a teacher works with. Certainly, provide rich lesson support materials and sample materials but don't fall into the trap of thinking that a teacher is just a 'deliverer' of other people's materials and we should 'maximise their time to deliver.'

13. Build on work already underway to reduce unnecessary teacher workload, plan and collaborate and independently evaluate the effectiveness of these measures on teachers' time.

- a. Our suggested response to addressing these broader issues is outlined at the beginning of this paper. Many of the actions outlined in this action paper will only serve to increase workloads – for example, if all of the new guidelines and pilot studies become enacted, who is it that will be



asked to read, understand and implement all the 'bits? We need an overview strategy, not a myriad of responses.

- b. We support reducing unnecessary workload but also see the response 12b above.
- c. In terms of the specific actions, we agree that there are opportunities to lessen teachers' loads - primary teachers need as much planning-release time as their secondary colleagues; activities that are not core to teaching and learning such as playground duty, bus duty and first aid might be assigned to support staff. Teachers want and need planning time and this should be generously allocated.

14. Develop national guidelines to support early career teachers and new school leaders including mentoring and induction.

Support for new teachers and new leaders is important. APPA supports an emphasis on mentoring support.

15. Develop and support career pathways which value teachers and reflect transitions in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

- a. We don't really know what this means.
- b. While national standards are considered useful, some argue that they can be far too reductionist and don't capture the sophistication of excellent teaching.
- c. What would a career path look like if it was conceived as graduate through to retirement? How might we plan for ongoing credentialling, remuneration advances, opportunities for higher duties and responsibilities? What might this look like?

16. Improve access to high-quality First Nations' cultural responsiveness resources to ensure teachers are better prepared to teach First Nations peoples in culturally safe ways.

This is supported but once again, don't make it another add on. A new primary curriculum should incorporate this emphasis.

17. Streamline Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers (HALT) processes to make it less burdensome for teachers, set a target to increase the number of HALTs, and incorporate recognition of equivalent qualification and certification processes.

NAC members partially support the recognition of HALTs. We agree the process of qualifying for a HALT position needs considerable refinement. A more holistic assessment of highly accomplished teaching is recommended together with a process to build the impact and abilities of ALL teachers. If HALT positions are to be retained, we need to ensure the fidelity of the appointment process and ensure the process is much less time consuming for all involved.

18. Develop micro-credentials and expand the Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) to enhance teachers' access to quality professional development.

The budgeted trial will be watched with interest.



19. Examine how to support implementation of the national curriculum.

APPA calls for a new primary curriculum which reflects the realities of primary schools. We know how to implement the existing curriculum – we just don't have the time or resources.

20. Each initiative in the next National School Reform Agreement will be subject to a Teacher Workload Impact Assessment.

The next NSRA should step away from disconnected initiatives and put in place broad policy approaches such as those suggested by APPA in our NSRA response. APPA's submission to the NSRA focused on an integrated set of changes which provide opportunities to review and reimagine the future of education in this country.

We note the Productivity Commission addresses some of these ideas and expresses particular concern for addressing inequality, student outcomes and expanding the discussion of outcomes to include student wellbeing.

However, APPA remains concerned that the approach taken by the Productivity Commission will not result in the hoped-for improvements in student outcomes. We believe this, because of the assumption that seems to be in place, that improvement can be addressed by a series of individual initiatives rather than a more integrated approach.

The interim report states that "despite the large increase in public funding since 2018, student outcomes have stagnated." Yet the interim report suggests a continued approach of much the same – prioritising a set of projects that sounds good but does little to address the fundamental problems underpinning bureaucratic interaction with education in this country. Under the policy settings adopted for the last 20 years, education has indeed gone backward. Yet the blame is continually apportioned to schools rather than questioning the bureaucratic structures which set the conditions under which schools are operating. This must change.

APPA calls for the next NSRA to be a catalyst for real school reform. What does it look like for governments to enter into a National Reform Agreement which is focussed on a new way of working, which harnesses the energy of professionals working in the area to achieve mutually desired results? What it shouldn't be, is more of the same, of more and more measuring in the hope that results come from increased micromanagement and falsely premised accountability. School-based personnel feel confined by a morass of measurement which kills initiative and creativity and inhibits schools responding community by community, to pressing local needs.

21. Identify the most effective use of initial teacher education (ITE) students, teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff.

This is so contextual that general advice is unlikely to be helpful. With respect, this is exactly the kind of initiative that adds to principal and teacher workload rather than assisting.



We need to make resourcing available so that local decision making can proceed – principals need to be trusted to make good local decisions.

22. **Identify and assess the effectiveness of initiatives to support teacher retention.**

Again, the broader issues impacting improved teacher retention are well dealt with earlier in this response.

Priority area 4 – Elevating the profession

This priority area is strongly supported. NAC members support a plan to recognise the value of the role of teachers. As discussed in section one, this campaign must be accompanied by actions to improve teachers' work conditions. It is not enough to run campaigns without commensurate actions to make the actual profession 'attractive.'

23. **A targeted national campaign to raise the status and value the role of teachers.**

Promotion of teaching as a career is one factor. Ensuring teaching is attractive as a career also requires a focus on generous remuneration and working conditions. Incentives to attract staff to work in hard to staff schools and remote areas, needs attention. Experiencing practicums in remote settings can be expensive for student-teachers who may forgo part time work in their usual places of residence. Subsidies to undertake practicums in hard to staff areas, may encourage graduate teachers to consider remote positions.

- a. Broadly supported. Emphasise the reasons teachers do the job.
- b. Research into the factors which make people deeply engage with their work include:
 - i. when they feel they are contributing to something bigger than them - a shared sense of purpose, something meaningful;
 - ii. when they feel their skills are being utilised to a high degree;
 - iii. when they engage positively with other people.

When people see how their efforts have a genuine impact on the lives of others, even mundane work becomes more rewarding. All these things are central teaching, but there are a number of factors which **reduce the purposefulness of teaching** and increase the **purposelessness**.

And it is these deeper, underlying factors which must be addressed as part of establishing teaching as an attractive profession and a profession which retains and attracts teaching workforce members.

- c. Suggested that 'teacher champions' be identified to deliver the message.

24. **Encourage members of the public to nominate teachers for Medals of the Order of Australia.**

Priority area 5 – Better understanding future teacher workforce needs

Agreed we need good data to assist in workforce planning. However, if we don't use the data, what is the point? Demographic projections have been flagging the current workforce shortages for at least 15 years. To be at this of critical teacher shortages now, is a significant failure of the bureaucracy.



Exit interviews when people leave their job would provide helpful information. Where are principals and teachers going? Why are they leaving?

25. Develop and publish nationally consistent teacher workforce projections based on consistent standards, disaggregated at a regional level and by sector/subject specialisation, to enable a national understanding of teacher demand.

Add in sector. Please note the secondary bias in some of these actions. The goals of primary education need revising and we need a primary curriculum which incorporates 'subjects' but is not subject based in its conception.

26. Develop and publish nationally consistent initial teacher education (ITE) graduate supply data, including disaggregated by sector and subject specialisation and participation in ITE at the regional level, to enable a national understanding of teacher supply.

Please note the sector bias inherent in the assumptions underlying this action. APPA keeps calling for a primary curriculum and the secondary orientation (with its focus on subject specialisation), further highlights this need.

27. Develop and publish data about teacher wellbeing and career intentions.

The notes against this action say that AITSL will incorporate additional questions into their ATWD survey. We support this proposal but suggest that APPA has a key role in communicating the goals of the survey to increase participation.

Additional comments:

- This action plan must be situated within the national workforce context. There is high demand for workers in many areas across the country. We have moved to an employee market and successful initiatives to attract teachers will have to compete with other areas of the economy. As a result, a key strategy should be encouraging teachers who have retired or left teaching early, to consider part-time roles.
- Perhaps a national 'locum teacher' program that is financially enticing, could be of assistance in filling short term vacancies in harder to staff areas.

APPA National Advisory Council

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